WEB OF SPIDER-MAN®

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FALL OF THE GODS?
The realm of Asgard falls in Broxton as The Sentry, overwhelmed by madness, drove the ancient structure to the ground in the final...(more)

SOMETHING'S COOKING IN THE KITCHEN
After an intense firefight in Hell's Kitchen, dozens of H.A.M.M.E.R. agents have been confirmed missing... (more)

WHO WAS BEN REILLY?
Search of the City's archives find detailed accounts on a Ben Reilly -- but who is he? No one in the city seems to know! (more)

Peter Parker's life has only started to get more complicated recently. Granted, the ol' "Parker Luck" has always plagued him but, now, things seem to be getting worse than ever.

To the world at large, Peter is known by his alter ego, Spider-Man. In the past few weeks, though, Spidey's had to face down his toughest and deadliest foes. With opponents coming at him from every angle, Spider-Man's had to face a gauntlet of some of his fiercest opponents.

The worst, though, came when Peter's longtime boss, Mayor J. Jonah Jameson, fired him. After falsifying a photo to make the mayor look like a hero, Peter quickly became the most unemployable photographer in the city. For once, Peter Parker was more of a menace to the public than the web-slinging Spider-Man.

Deflated, weakened, and exhausted, Peter Parker is the most vulnerable he's been in a long, long time.

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WHOA, WHOA, WHOA!!

HOLD THE PHONE!!

"THE HEROIC AGE"?

THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE CALLING THIS THING?

FROM THE SAME PEOPLE WHO BROUGHT US THE 'ROID RAGE "CIVIL WAR"?!

AND THE "SECRET INVASION"? REMEMBER THAT? A SKRULL IN EVERY CORNCRIB?

SOME PEOPLE IN THE M.S.M. SAY IT'S TOO EARLY TO PANIC.

I SAY THEY'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION!!

PANIC

WEE-WOO-WEE-WOO-WEE-WOO

AS THIS CHART CLEARLY SHOWS, THE BRAVE NEW WORLD OF MISTER "I'M NOT DEAD YET" STEVE ROGERS--

--IS NOTHING MORE OR LESS THAN SALVO ONE OF THE TAKEOVER OF THE UNITED STATES BY SUPER-MARXISTS!

HAMMER

SHIELD

AIM

PYM

CAGE

OSBORN

AVENGERS

PANCAKES

PANIC

AND WHO SQUATS IN THE CENTER OF THIS CLEVERLY-CONCEALED WEB OF FOUR-COLOR FRAUD?

THAT'S RIGHT. *SPIDER-MAN.* THE MOST MYSTERIOUS COSTUMED COMMIE OF ALL. WHAT'S HE HIDING, AMERICA?

I CAN'T TRUST A MAN WITH TWO COSTUMES!!

I JUST...I JUST DON'T KNOW WHY...I'M THE ONLY WHO *CARES...*

...WHAT HAPPENS...

...TO A *NORMAL* AMERICA...

YOU'RE WATCHING THE MARK OF BRANDEN--THE VOICE FOR REAL AMERICA!

THE MARK OF BRANDEN

FFSSSSSSSSSSSS!!!

I DON'T CARE IF STARK *IS* THREATENING TO YANK SPOTS IF WE DON'T TONE DOWN THE ANTI-MASK STUFF!

WE'RE ***DESTROYING*** OUR TIME SLOT! I GOT ADVERTISERS WAITING IN ALLEYS ***ON THEIR KNEES*** TO TAKE HIS PLACE!

WISDOM AND * KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE THE STABILITY OF THY TIMES

KINON

MARK BRANDEN.

YOU TELL MR. ***VINCIBLE*** HE CAN STICK A REPULSOR RAY UP HIS...

WH-WHO ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?

I AM TRUTH.

YOU HAVE EVADED ME FOR A LONG TIME.

BUT NOW I HAVE FOUND YOU AT LAST.

THAT'S HIM!

THAT'S THE GUY!

THE...?

THE PSYCHO WHO SENT ME ALL THOSE MANIFESTOS!!

MARK...

...WHO DO YOU *MEAN*...? THERE'S NO ONE THERE!

WAIT...

IS ONE OF YOU LONG UNDERWEAR TYPES CASTING AN ILLUSION OR SOMETHING?

SHHRAKAKK

SKKRAKKOOW

AAAAHHHHH!!!

AAAAHHHHH!!!

SOMEBODY HELP-- TACKLE HIM!!

ARE YOU BLIND?!?

STAY AWAY!

GAGGHH!

SNAAAAAP

UFFF!

C'MON, BUDDY, *C'MON!* THIS ISN'T WORTH IT--IN FRONT OF ALL THESE PEOPLE-- KIDS--

IT'S *SHOW BUSINESS!* A *TV SHOW!* I DON'T MEAN *ANY* OF THAT STUFF!

WANNA KNOW HOW I STARTED IN ON THE *LET'S-GET-SPIDER-MAN* KICK?

HE HAD A *STREET FIGHT* WITH *VENOM*--KNOCKED THE FREAK BACK INTO ME--I SPILLED A GRANDE LATTE ALL OVER A NEW ITALIAN THREE-PIECE! *RUINED* IT!

SO YOU SEE--I'M NOT *REALLY* ANTI-HERO! I'M ANTI-*PERSONAL INCONVENIENCE!* HEH!

YOU DON'T WANT TO KILL ME FOR THAT, RIGHT?

RIGHT?

ULTRATEMPS

PETER PALMER?

PARKER.

PARKER PALMER?

THE SKILLS TEST IS FORTY-FIVE MINUTES LONG.

IT'LL GIVE US AN IDEA OF YOUR ***BASIC COMPETENCY*** BEFORE WE PUT YOU IN ROTATION FOR TEMP POSITIONS. YOU'LL BE QUIZZED ON ***WORD...***

UH--SORRY... WHAT DO YOU MEAN? LIKE, DO I KNOW, WORDS...?

NO...THE ***SOFTWARE*** PROGRAM. YOU'VE HEARD OF EXCEL?

I'VE... HEARD IT'S A ***VERB...***

POWER POINT?

THE NEW ENERGY BAR?

MR. PARKER... WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU HAD A REAL ***JOB?***

WELL, MY UNCLE BEN ONCE HAD ME SELLING "***GRIT***" IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. IT WAS A ***NEWSPAPER*** THAT ONLY SEEMED TO ADVERTISE IN ***COMIC BOOKS,*** WHICH I NEVER UNDERSTOOD.

PRETTY SURE IT WAS A ***MAGGIA FRONT...***

SIGH YOU'VE HEARD OF ***TYPING,*** RIGHT?

YES! THAT I'VE SEEN ON TV!

WONDERFUL. FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE SCREEN. WE'LL SEE HOW MANY WORDS YOU TYPE PER ***MINUTE...***

UM... MA'AM? PARDON ME, MA'AM?

MY KEYBOARD'S BROKEN.

"Q-W-E-R-T-Y...?"

THESE LETTERS ARE ALL IN THE ***WRONG ORDER...***

KIDDING!

45 Minutes Later...

MOST JOBS GET HANDED OUT MONDAY MORNING. START CALLING AROUND 8:30 TO SEE WHAT'S AVAILABLE.

GREAT. WHEN DO MY MEDICAL BENEFITS START TO KICK IN?

THAT WOULD BE *2014*, I BELIEVE.

AND IF I DON'T HEAR FROM YOU...?

WELL, POSITIONS ARE DISTRIBUTED ON A FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVE BASIS.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO WAIT ***HERE*** FOR WORK TO COME IN, LIKE THESE FOLKS...

HAS IT REALLY COME TO THIS?

MY ONLY MARKETABLE SKILLS INVOLVE SCIENCE, PHOTOGRAPHY AND FACE-PLANTING SOCIOPATHS.

WITH MY USUAL FLAIR FOR ***LONG-TERM PLANNING***, I ***DROPPED OUT*** OF GRADUATE SCHOOL. WITHOUT A ***DEGREE*** I'M NEVER GONNA LAND A RESEARCH GIG...

...AND A MISGUIDED ATTEMPT TO HELP ***J. JONAH JAMESON***, OF ALL PEOPLE, HAS RENDERED ME ***UNEMPLOYABLE*** AS A SHUTTERBUG...

SEE ASM #624 FOR DETAILS.--SPORADICALLY EMPLOYED BRENNAN

...SO I GUESS ***THAT*** DID IN WHATEVER REMAINED OF ***DIGNITY***...

HEY!

YOU SNOOZE YOU LOSE, POINDEXTER!

THE RICH GET RICHER.

FIGURES.

THAT LEAVES HITTING UP *STEVE ROGERS* FOR SOME KIND OF *AVENGERS* SALARY...

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE

NAH...IF I **DO**, HE'S JUST GONNA GIVE ME THAT "*ASK NOT WHAT YOUR COUNTRY CAN DO FOR **YOU***" LOOK THAT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I'M NOT FIT TO WAX HIS ***SHIELD***...

THE CRIME SCENE UNIT? THAT COULD MEAN...

CARLIE!

WHOA! WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY FRIEND PETE?

WHAT'S WITH THE MONKEY SUIT?

CSU

"*FRIEND*"? WE'VE ONLY BEEN ON A COUPLE DATES, SO THAT'S ALL WE ARE ***STILL***, I GUESS...

...JUST AS WELL, BECAUSE AS SPIDEY I'M IN AN EVEN ***LESS*** DEFINED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ***BLACK CAT***...

EH... VALIANTLY DOING MY PART TO LOWER THE COUNTRY'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE...

YEAH? HOW'S THAT WORKING OUT?

LET'S TALK ABOUT *YOUR* DAY, SHALL WE?

AW. I'M SORRY, PETE.

POLICE

CSU

Crime Scene

YOU'RE NOT GONNA GET IN TROUBLE CHATTING ON THE CLOCK, ARE YOU? I DON'T WANT YOU JOINING ME ON THE BREADLINE...

NAH, I DON'T THINK *HE'S* GONNA MIND.

OUCH.

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN IN
THE EXTREMIST

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DAN BUCKLEY *PUBLISHER*

ALAN FINE *EXEC. PRODUCER*

MARK BRANDEN--HE OF THE *PROFESSIONALLY OUTRAGED* SET--WAS LAYING INTO THE AVENGERS AND SUCH PRETTY HARD--YOUR PAL *SPIDEY* INCLUDED--

SPIDER-MAN HAS ENEMIES? IN THE *MEDIA?*

I AM *SHOCKED.*

THE SENSELESS MURDER OF RESPECTED COMMENTATOR--AND BELOVED *CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTOR*--MARK BRANDEN IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED!

AND I REMAIN *UNCONVINCED* OF SPIDER-MAN'S *NON-INVOLVEMENT* IN THIS BRAZEN CRIME--

ONLY *ONE MORE* FOR MAYOR JAMESON, PLEASE...

NYPD

BRANDEN MUST'VE TICKED OFF THE *WRONG* SUPER-GUY, ONE WITH SOME KIND OF *INVISIBILITY*--

'CAUSE OF ALL THE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE IN THE PLAZA, NO ONE *BUT* BRANDEN SAW A *THING!*

THE KILLER LEFT THIS NOTE BEHIND ON THE BODY.

WELL. THAT'S *ONE* WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WORLD, I GUESS.

you me

THERE'S A HANDWRITTEN *MANIFESTO* ON THE BACK.

They tell us the world is GRAY.

The government. The media. The schools. The corporations.

They tell us these LIES because it is more CONVENIENT to them if we are WEAK.

That our CHOICES mean NOTHING so we should just do what they TELL US.

"There are TWO SIDES to every story."

This much is TRUE.

There is the RIGHT SIDE and the WRONG SIDE.

The HEROES are on The side of RIGHT.

Those in the GRAY WORLD, they try to TEAR DOWN those Who have made RIGHT CHOICES so the WEAK and the PREVARICATING feel BETTER about themselves.

Well I say you no longer have the OPTION of remaining GRAY.

I will DIVIDE YOU into One or the OTHER and expose you for what you ARE.

THIS is my MISSION.

For I AM THE EXTREMIST.

BETTY BRANT MANAGED TO GET HER HANDS ON *THE CRACKPOT MANIFESTO* AND POSTED IT ON HER *"BUGLEGIRL"* SITE.

ttp://buglegirl.com/

UGLE GI

OME NEWS VIDEO BLOG ABOUT C

STRA
MANI

THEY TELL US THE
THE GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS. THE CO
THEY TELL US THE
MORE CONVENIEN
WEAK.
THAT OUR CHOIC
WE SHOULD JUS
US.
"THERE ARE T
STORY"

SERIAL KILLERS ARE TRYING TO HELP ME WITH MY IMAGE PROBLEM.

JUST WHAT I NEED.

GUESS I COULD PULL THE OL' "*SWING-AROUND-THE-CITY-'TIL-I-FIND-THE-MALEFACTOR*" ROUTINE...

BUT THAT HARDLY *EVER* WORKS THESE DAYS. I BARELY FIND ANY REGULAR MUGGERS OR CAT BURGLARS!

PEOPLE ARE JUST ROBBING EACH OTHER OVER THE *INTERNET* NOW. LESS *OVERHEAD*.

AS IF WITH MY *UNEMPLOYMENT* I NEED *ANOTHER* REASON TO FEEL HOPELESS AND *USELESS*.

I JUST WISH... I COULD DO *SOMETHING*...

HMM.

BAD SPIDEY PIX
NEVER EVER USE

FWEEEEEEEE

C'MON, WHAT *IS* THIS?

YOU GOTTA GIVE ME MORE!

WANT THOSE STUCK-UP MARINE VETS TO SHOW YOU UP NEXT WEEK? *SHOW ME SOME HOO-RAH!*

WHEEL

ESEL! TAYLOR! YOU'RE *IN!*

HAHAHAHA-- *CLASSIC.*

I KNOW, ISN'T IT GREAT?

WHAT ARE YOU TWO GIGGLING ABOUT?

AW, FLASH-- DON'T KNOW IF YOU WANNA *SEE* THIS, MAN--

THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE LIKE THE WORLD'S NUMBER-ONE *SPIDER-FAN,* AREN'T YOU?

THAT DUDE WHO TOOK ALL THOSE PICTURES OF SPIDEY--

THE ONE WHO JUST GOT *CANNED* BY THE MAYOR--

HE'S PUT ALL HIS "*BLOOPERS AND OUTTAKES*" ON-LINE, AND MAN THEY ARE *HI-LAR-I-OUS!*

EPIC FAIL

THE *HELL?*

PARKER!

FATBOOK

SPIDER-FAIL.COM!!

FAIL

FAIL

PPPPFFFFFF!!!

THAT'S AWESOME!

FAIL

FAIL

THIS IS THE SINGLE GREATEST WEB SITE I HAVE EVER SEEN.

HEY! SPIDER-BLOGGER! I TAUGHT YOU *WELL*, YOUNG GRASSHOPPER...

BETTY! YEAH, THANKS FOR SHOWING ME HOW TO SET THIS SITE UP...

...AND HOW TO USE MY ROOMMATE'S *SCANNER.*

NOW I JUST NEED TO FIGURE OUT HOW I'LL UPLOAD PHOTOS WHEN MICHELE COMES BACK FROM TEXAS...

NO PROBLEM, BUDDY. THE STUDENT SEEMS TO HAVE SURPASSED THE MASTER...

BUGLE GIRL

SPIDERFAIL

AS SITE HOST, I HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR STATS...

...DO YOU REALIZE YOU'VE HAD MORE THAN *TWO-AND-A-HALF MILLION UNIQUE HITS* SINCE YOU STARTED?

REALLY? UH...IS THAT GOOD?

GOOD? I WANT TO START ADVERTISING BUGLEGIRL ON YOUR SITE!

HOW MUCH WILL YOU CHARGE ME--KEEPING IN MIND WE ARE OLD FRIENDS FROM WAY BACK...

I--UH-- HAVEN'T REALLY--

BLOOP

HOLD ON--CALL WAITING--

MISTER PARKER? *GORDON HOPSFELL.* I'M AN EDITOR AT THE *GERMAN PUBLISHING CONGLOMERATE* THAT BOUGHT THE RIGHTS TO YOUR "*WEBS*" BOOK OF *SPIDER-MAN PHOTOS.*

LISTEN, SEEN *SPIDER-FAIL.* FUNNY STUFF. *FUNNY!*

I'M... NOT REALLY TAKING OFFERS...

BOOP

ENCRYPTED AVENGERS HQ

EEK.

AGENDA

WE'RE THINKING A GLOSSY COFFEE TABLE COLLECTION OF "*SF,*" JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS...WE CAN GET *GREAT* PLACEMENT IN *URBAN OUTFITTERS...*

LEADERSHIP MANUAL

BOSS

SIGH HE'S NOT PICKING UP.

HOW'D HE GET ON THE TEAM ANYWAY?

AAAAAHHH!

IF IT'S ULTRON, THEY'LL CALL BACK.

OF COURSE! *OF COURSE!*

THE PERFECT SOLUTION TO MY JOB PROBLEMS *WOULD BE* DAILY ON-LINE SELF-INFLICTED *HUMILIATION.*

BUT TO GET BACK TO WHAT I WAS ACTUALLY *TRYING* TO DO HERE...

...I.E., FLUSH THE EXTREMIST *OUT* AND BRING *HIM* TO *ME*...

...I GUESS I NEED SOME KIND OF A MANIFESTO OF MY *OWN*, AN *IDEOLOGY*, JUST LIKE *BRANDEN*...

SO...

"WHY I HATE SPIDER-MAN"...

...BY PETER PARKER...

YEAH...

MAYBE I SHOULD THINK OF SOMETHING...

I CAN ACTUALLY *SHARE*...

BZZZT

YAH!

HELLO?

PARKER! GET YOUR SCRAWNY BUTT DOWN HERE RIGHT NOW SO I CAN KICK IT ACROSS TOWN!!

FLASH...?

DAMN STRAIGHT IT'S FLASH!

YOU CAN SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT ABOUT ME--

--BUT YOU CAN'T MOCK SPIDEY LIKE THAT WITHOUT HEARING FROM ME!

SINCE YOU'RE TOO MUCH OF A WUSS TO HAVE AN ELEVATOR IN YOUR BUILDING--

--COME DOWN HERE SO I CAN BEAT YOU TO DEATH WITH MY WHEELCHAIR!!

FLASH TOLD ME IF IT WEREN'T FOR SPIDER-MAN'S QUOTE-UNQUOTE HEROIC EXAMPLE...

...HE NEVER WOULD HAVE VOLUNTEERED FOR AN *EXTRA TOUR OF DUTY*...

...AND THEN... HE'D STILL HAVE HIS...

FACE IT, PARKER:

HAVE YOU EVER DONE ANY *REAL GOOD* AS SPIDER-MAN...

...IN THE EYES OF ANYONE BUT THIS *EXTREMIST* NUT...?

THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!

MICHELE!

I THOUGHT... YOUR TRIAL IN HOUSTON LASTED UNTIL FRIDAY...

IT WAS *SUPPOSED* TO, BUT THE IDIOT *JUDGE* GAVE THE DEFENSE A STAY UNTIL NEXT WEEK...

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?
I WAS GONE THREE DAYS!
SORRY... I KIND OF LOST TRACK OF TIME. I WAS BUSY PLOGGING.
WHAT? WHAT IS THAT?
PIZZA DUDE
PIZZA DUDE
BLOGGING, BUT SOLELY WITH PICTURES.
IT'S A WORD I MADE UP.
BUT THERE'S NO COMPUTER HERE EXCEPT--
OH. MY. GOD.
YOU'VE BEEN IN MY ROOM?!?!
HEY I'M STILL DOWN HERE PARKER!!
AND YOU WERE USING MY COMPUTER?!
HOW COULD YOU? IT'S ENCRYPTED!
YEAH... BUT YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF A LESS OBVIOUS PASSWORD THAN "PARKER SUX."
OH AND LOOK AT THIS!!
YOU INFECTED IT WITH SOME KIND OF VIRUS!
I NEED THIS FOR WORK, YOU KNOW! IT'S NOT A TOY!
...

I GOT A GREAT IDEA, MICHELE!

IN WELL-EARNED PENANCE FOR MY EVIL ROOMMATE WAYS, I PROMISE TO CLEAN THE WHOLE APARTMENT *IMMEDIATELY--*

IF YOU SPEND THE NIGHT IN A *HOTEL!*

ARE YOU *INSANE?* I SPENT SIX HOURS STUCK ON THE RUNWAY! I JUST WANT TO TAKE OFF MY *HEELS--*

YOU

ME

OH. MY.

MAGGOT.

YOU ARE NOT FIT TO LICK SPIDER-MAN'S BOOTS, MUCH LESS TAKE HIS PICTURE.

YOU HAVE EVADED ME FOR BUT A SHORT TIME.

BUT I WILL ALLOW YOU TO *DENY* ME *NO LONGER.*

PARKER-- **LOOK OUT--**

I AM TRUTH.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHAT? FOR WHO?

THERE'S NOBODY THERE!

To Be Continued!

It wasn't long ago that I discovered my entire life was a *lie*. I wasn't the man I thought I was. Hell, I wasn't a man at *all*.

No, I was something out of a cheesy science fiction movie: a *clone*. Unbelievable, right? But, unfortunately...

...true.

I didn't take the news very well. In fact, I tumbled down into a darkness that nearly swallowed me *whole*.

For months I wandered like a zombie, living on the fringes, doing things that--well, let's just say I didn't have a lot to be *proud* of.

I told myself I was doing it for *him*--for *Peter Parker*. I could have stayed, I could have fought for a piece of his world. But I *didn't*.

...you could say that, in *dying*--Sydney Carton was *reborn*.

And so I sank deeper and deeper into that darkness--until the night when...

...everything...

...changed.

I realized that, if my life truly ***was*** a lie--then I was free. Free to ***embrace*** lies: reinvent myself, become anyone I could ***imagine.***

So I left the States, left Parker, behind. Headed for England, then France. Then ***here:***

Rome--teaching English lit to the children of American diplomats and businessmen. The money's good, the kids seem to like me. The city... is ***perfection.***

"Recalled to life" as Dickens put it. He was talking about Doctor Manette--but I think it applies to Carton, as well.

So ***here's*** a question for you: Can a man actually find his life--his purpose, his freedom--in his moment of ***death?***

It's amazing how far a good lie can ***take*** you.

Un Nuova Inizio?

J.M. DeMatteis--writer ***Val Semeiks***--pencils ***Dan Green***--inks
Chris Sotomayor--colorist ***Dave Sharpe***--letterer
Special thanks to ***Carlo Carlei*** for his invaluable assistance

A tale of
Ben Reilly

And here's *another* question for you:

What if, somehow, Carton was *rescued* from the guillotine? What if--just at the moment of noble sacrifice--he was able to get away, begin a new *life*... as a new *man?*

RRRRIINGGGG

DIC

Would he have made the *most* of that chance--or just *reverted* to what he'd been before?

I want you all to go home and write that new ending for the story. *You* decide what Sydney Carton would have done--

"--had he *lived.*"

...you've been in Rome six weeks and still haven't seen the *Coliseum?*

Work keeps me pretty *busy.* Haven't had much time for *sightseeing.*

Work, work--that's all *questo scemo* **thinks** about. If it wasn't for me, he'd never leave his *apartment.*

It's like he's afraid of a little *fun.*

I don't think Benjamin's *afraid,* Paolo. I think he's just *shy.*

But the two of us...we'll coax him out of his *shell.*

I'll be right back. Don't you go away.

Mio Dio! Look at the way that woman *walks.*

You're one *lucky man,* Reilly.

What do you *mean?*

She's *crazy* about you.

You're the one who's crazy.

Please--it's so obvious even *un imbranato* like *you* should be able to see it.

Did you know her father's one of the *richest* men in Italy? Has businesses all over the *world.*

Know who his best friend is? The *Prime Minister.* Hell, he could *be* Prime Minister if he wanted to.

So what would a girl like *that* want with a guy like *me?*

Testone!

Where do you *get* these ideas? When life offers you a gift, you don't turn it down! You open your arms and say *"grazie"!*

Now move your butt and go ask her out--before *I* do.

From the moment we met--he teaches art at the *Roosevelt School*--Paolo made me his *pet project.* He's dragged me to his favorite restaurants, introduced me to his family and friends.

At first I didn't trust him (because, basically, I don't trust *anybody*), but it turns out he's sincere.

...go *ahead*-- before she leaves.

To a *fault.*

I'm *telling* you, she's not interested in--

Simona! *Wait!* Ben wants to *talk* to you!

Something to say to me, Benjamin?

No.

Yes.

I...well, I was thinking that maybe... y'know, *some*time... the two of us could--

Cafe' Rosati in Piazza Del Popolo-- after *work* tomorrow.

Around *seven...?*

Yeah...uh... *sure.*

That sounds good.

I'll make an Italian out of you *yet.*

Why *not* go out with her? I'm a man without a past. I can be anything...any *one*...she *needs* me to be.

Parker...he was *Mr. Honesty.* But some of us don't have that luxury. Anyway, a lie can be a *good thing* sometimes.

It can give a man a dream to grow *into.* Maybe make him a better person. And what's wrong with *that?*

Now if I can just stop being so damn *paranoid.*

It's getting to the point where my spider-sense starts buzzing every time I'm out in a *crowd.* Started up again tonight in the *restaurant.*

It's like my *mind* is influencing my *senses.* And that's not good.

I've got to learn to *relax* a little. Have some faith that things will--

Buona sera, Mr. Reilly. I hope I didn't *startle* you.

Who *are* you? What are you doing in my--

Easy, my friend. I'm not here to rob you or do you harm.

I'm just here...to *talk.*

About *what?*

Not *what.*

Who.

Simona Battaglia.

Simona--?

I...I don't understand.

Aspetta... just let me finish my wine--

I hope you don't mind, it's just...I know you don't drink--and I wasn't sure how *late* you'd be--

--so I brought the bottle along *with* me.

You know I don't--?

Who the hell *are* you?

My name doesn't matter. What matters is that the man who *employs* me loves his daughter very much.

She means more to him than life itself--which is why he makes it his business to keep a very *careful eye* on his beloved Simona--

--and *everyone* she associates with.

You've been...*spying* on me?

Investigating.

And a good thing, too--because it seems that your *passport*...your *references*... everything about you--

--is a *lie.*

You don't have the *right* to--

To what? Protect a man's only daughter from someone who might very well be a *criminal?* I have *every* right, Mr. Reilly--

--or whatever your name really is.

If it's any *consolation,* my instincts--which are rarely wrong--tell me that you're, essentially, a *good* man.

The trouble is, you're just not good enough for *Simona.*

I don't know what it is you're running *from*...or *to*...but I urge you to *keep* running. Out of Rome. Out of Italy. And if you *don't*--

--you have my word that you'll very quickly find yourself in *prison*...or someplace far *worse.*

Buona fortuna, Mr. Reilly.

Good luck.

KAGSSSSHHHH!

SKRREEEEEEE

KRROOOM!

You think you *know* me?

TOOM!

You think you KNOW me?!

You have *no idea* who I really am--or what I'm *capable* of!

You tell your employer that threatening me was the *biggest mistake* of his life!

You tell him that his power and influence don't mean *anything* to me!

I'll show him... show you both--what power *really* is! I'll--

Who *am* I?

I'm not *Parker*, that's for sure. But I see now... that I'm not *Reilly*, either.

I'm still some...*thing* that crawled out of a tank of chemicals. The *mirror image* of a man--but not *real*.

Not *yet*.

But maybe *one* day.

*Quest' uomo è pericoloso e imprevedibile. Due qualità che **ammiro**.*

*Ma e anche un **mistero**. È come sai bene, **Vincenzo**--*

This man is dangerous and unpredictable. Two qualities I admire.

But he's also a *mystery*. And as you know, *Vincenzo*--

*--Io **detesto** i misteri.*

--I *despise* mysteries.

...END